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# SCIENCE

FRIDAY, JULY 9, 1915

FIRST GET THE FACTS<sup>1</sup>

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THERE is connected with the Department of Commerce a remarkable institution called the Bureau of Standards. Its work is more or less familiar to you because one or more groups of students from this school have visited it at various times. I have on some occasions spoken of this bureau as the "house of accuracy," for in it in a special sense the truth is sought. We call the seeking of this kind of truth research. It may be chemical research or physical research or the act of research applied to any of the sciences that underlie our industries and public utilities. Truth is sought in this work because it is believed that the facts concerning nature are of infinite value to mankind. It is recognized that the effectiveness of our civilization rests upon facts first ascertained and then used. It is there thought faulty to proceed on the basis of incomplete truth or of undigested facts, and neither time, labor, nor expense is spared to find the facts and make them known to those who can use them.

One of the standards of the Bureau of Standards itself must be that of speaking the truth so far as it shall have become known, and men know they may depend upon what it says as expressing the truth within those limits in which it has been ascertained. To tell half of a truth if the other half were known would be thought a destructive violation of the very *raison d'être* of the service. To know the truth and not to tell it would be equally violative.

In what has been thus far said I have

<sup>1</sup> MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for review should be sent to Professor J. McKeen Cattell, Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

<sup>1</sup> Address of The Honorable William C. Redfield, Secretary of Commerce, before the Case School of Applied Science, Cleveland, Ohio, May 27, 1915.